



NEWS RELEASE  
*Office of the  
United States Attorney  
for the  
District of Nebraska*  
**Deborah R. Gilg**

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June 18, 2010

United States Attorney Deborah R. Gilg, and the Nebraska State Patrol announce the following information for the attention of the media:

**Event Triggering this Release:**

Today, the Honorable Richard G. Kopf sentenced Christopher Merritt, age 36, to a 60 month prison term following his conviction for possession of child pornography. In addition to the prison sentence, Merritt was ordered to serve 5 years of supervised release following prison, and pay a \$100 Special Assessment. The computer equipment used by Merritt was also forfeited to the United States.

Merritt came to the attention of the Nebraska State Patrol during the course of an investigation into the distribution of child pornography through peer-to-peer networks, such as Limewire. Investigators were able to access files containing child pornography on Merritt's computer which were available to the public through the peer-to-peer network. Investigators then conducted a search of Merritt's residence in Sidney, Nebraska and seized two computers and related equipment. In all, Merritt had approximately 13 videos of child pornography on the seized computers.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov).

**Name of Defendant:** Christopher Merritt

**AKA:**

**Age:** 36

**City of residence:** Sidney,NE

**Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty):** Possession of child pornography, in violation of Title 18, United States Codes, Section 2252(a)(4)(B). Maximum penalty is up to 10 years imprisonment, up to a \$250,000 fine, or both imprisonment and fine, not less than 5 years of supervised release and a \$100 special assessment.

**Specific Location of Alleged Crime:** Sidney, Nebraska

**Location of Arrest:** Sidney, Nebraska

**Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug:**

**Others Charged in Same Scheme:**

**Relevant Dates:**

**Date of Alleged Crime:** October 31, 2008

**Federal Arrest Date:**

**Date Complaint Issued:**

**Indictment Filed Date:** January 22, 2009

**Initial Appearance Date:** February 9, 2009

**Plea or Trial and Date(s):** March 30, 2010

**Sentencing Date:** June 18, 2010

**Next Court Hearing Type and Date:**

**Assigned Magistrate Judge:** Zwart

**Held without Bond, or Released from Custody:**

**In Continuous Custody Since:**

**Assigned District Court Judge:** Richard G. Kopf

**Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release:** SAR